## THE

## Chap-Book

## SEMI-MONTHLY

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## THE QUATRAIN

A SINGLE fancy does not do
To last an epic poem through;
The sea is more than one small drop.—
Make it a quatrain then and stop.
FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.

### O, THAT WAY MADNESS LIES

A Play for Marionettes
PERSONS

A Père de Famille. (He is deaf—almost.)
A Mère de Famille. (She is blind—almost.)
A Jeune Fille, their daughter, (She is insane—almost.)
A VIEILLE FEMME.
Her PARROT.
THREE MAIDENS.
A DUMB SHOW of Seven PORTERS.
Seven times Seven Old Men who carry banners,
Other Auxiliaries.

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A small room, strangely narrow and low-ceiled. At either end of it a glass door flanked on each side by a little window. Close to one door the Père de Famille and the Mère de Famille sit vis-à-vis, knees touching, and regard the sinking sun across a flat landscape set with pollarded willows. Close to the other door sits their daughter, her hands passively folded, and contemplates the rising October moon, whose full circle is reflected in marshy waters. Overhead a

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single lamp shows as a pallid opalescent disc, and underfoot a dull but continuous rumble accompanies all things said and done,

THE DAUGHTER (speaking into vacancy). I am at home, THE FATHER (anxiously, to the Mother). Eh? What does she say?

THE MOTHER (loudly). She is at home. She says she is at home.

THE FATHER. She is at . . . ?

THE MOTHER. At home, She is at home.

THE FATHER. Ah! -- She is at home.

THE MOTHER. Yes, but she is not at home. I think she is worse, We do well to go forward,

THE FATHER, She is not worse.

THE MOTHER After all, she feels at home, I think she is better. We should do well to turn back.

THE FATHER. She is not better.

THE MOTHER. Not better?

THE FATHER. She is the same. Rest quiet.

[An apparition, short and sudden, of a cleft and solitary cypress-tree rising in a graveyard.]

THE MOTHER. What is she doing?

THE FATHER, What is she . . . ?

THE MOTHER, What is she doing, I ask, Tell me; tell me!

THE FATHER. She twists her hands. She stares abroad,

THE MOTHER, What does she see?

THE DAUGHTER. My sewing—will no one bring it to me? I left it above in my little chamber on the chimney-piece. The needle is sticking in the hem,

THE MOTHER (whimpering). My poor Ursule!

THE FATHER, What does she see? She sees the marshes, the clouds, the canals, the windmills; she sees a man just outside who presents a folded flag.

THE MOTHER. There have been others.

THE FATHER. There will be others still.

THE MOTHER (suddenly). She moans.

THE FATHER. She . . . ?

THE MOTHER. She moans.

THE FATHER. I do not know. There are tears on her cheek.

[Dead leaves sweep by, like a trailing flight of nocturnal birds. The sound of a bell, above all other sounds.]

THE MOTHER. Hark! It is a wedding bell,

THE DAUGHTER. My poor little garment must be ready.

THE FATHER. I hear it, too, It is a funeral-bell.

THE MOTHER. It may be both

THE FATHER. Or neither.

THE MOTHER. She knows.

THE DAUGHTER, Will no one bring it to me?

THE FATHER, Perhaps she does, She writhes, She waves her arms.

THE MOTHER. Could he but see her now !

THE FATHER. We cannot blame bim!

[The first star of evening appears, A will-o'-thewisp rises from the marsh, attempts to mount skyward, and falls back into the weeds and the slime.]

THE MOTHER. No; he was too high,

THE FATHER. And we were too humble,

[A second star appears. The two dance toward each other and merge into one. The will-o'-the-wisp flickers and expires.]

THE MOTHER. Nor can we blame her.

THE FATHER. What do you say? Louder-louder!

This uproar-it is too much!

THE MOTHER. I say we cannot blame her, either,

THE FATHER. Her? Whom?

THE MOTHER. Her,—her! That other, The third, (Suddenly reaching out her arms toward her Daughter), My poor Ursule!

THE FATHER, Leave her alone, She is better so.

THE DAUGHTER (babbling and sobbing). Poor flame !-so early quenched in tears!

[The marsh expands into a pond, Two white swans swim stately on its bosom. A wounded heron drags itself along the sedgy border.]

THE DAUGHTER (sobbing more wildly). Poor bird!
-poor bird! (She throws herself at full length on her couch.)

THE MOTHER. It is too much. Draw the curtain, She must become accustomed to drawn curtains and to narrow rooms. (The sun sinks.)

THE FATHER. Yes, they will do better for her there than we can do.

THE DAUGHTER (lifting herself). Yes, draw it-draw it close.

[A man appears outside her window, and offers stiffly a folded flag.]

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, draw it close! He shall not see me again! He has looked in on me too many times already! I know him! Forty-four times!

THE MOTHER. There have been others, THE FATHER. There will be others still,

[The man disappears, The Vision of a brightly illuminated Château, set on a triple terrace, A meteoric shower above its topmost turret, A parade of peacocks on the lower balustrade, The DAUGHTER screams.]

THE FATHER (rising in all haste), In heaven's name, let the curtains be drawn—and close!

THE MOTHER (rising also), What has she seen? What more is there to hide?

THE FATHER, The Château itself! The wedding illuminations! Haste—haste! (He draws his Daughter's curtain to.)

THE MOTHER, My poor Ursule!

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[A coup de sifflet. The uproar beneath them grows, yet disintegrates in growing. Great rocks of sound project themselves centrifugally, and through the débris a path is picked toward silence.]

THE FATHER. Thank heaven! We are half-way there!

[A moment of rest and quiet. The Daughter's door is opened, and Three Maidens appear and make as if to enter,]

THE DAUGHTER (springing up to close the door and to re-adjust the curtain). I am not at home, For shame—for shame!

THE FATHER. She is not at home, She knows it. She is better, Let us leave here—let us return.

THE MOTHER, She is not at home. She never will be at home. We have still far to go, Rest quiet,

[The Three Maidens retire abashed, The curtain has been torn down in the struggle and through the undraped panes there appears a Dumb Show:

A jostling multitude on a long and narrow stage, at whose back are many doors with various inscriptions: "Salle d'Attente;" "Restaurant lère Classe;" "Pour les Hommes;" "Chef de Gare." A slow procession of Seven Porters, each of whom carries a heavy chest.]

THE DAUGHTER (clasping her hands across her eyes).
Oh! Oh! Oh!

THE FATHER. The curtain! The curtain! The cur-

tain! (He fails to replace it, and tries to shut out the view by the interposition of his own bulk.)

THE MOTHER (quaveringly, after a purblind peering) What do you see? What do you see?

THE FATHER. I see the Count. He has varnished shoes. He wears a rosette. He comes this way.

THE DAUGHTER. Oh! Oh! Oh! —Not now—not now! —Why not before?

THE MOTHER. What else? What else?

THE FATHER. Hush—hush! She carries a parasol of white lace. She shakes rice from the folds of her gown. She stumbles against an old shoe.

THE DAUGHTER. Oh! Oh! Oh!

THE MOTHER. She is beautiful?

THE FATHER. Louder! You say that-

THE MOTHER. I ask if she is beautiful. But why do I ask? I know—I know! (Twilight falls; the air has become strangely thick and murky.)

THE FATHER. Yes, she is beautiful—beautiful as the dawn.

THE DAUGHTER, Oh! Oh! Oh!

THE MOTHER. My poor Ursule! (She tears down the opposite curtain, and hands it across to her busband.) Take this.

[Before he can put it in place an OLD WOMAN who carries a PARROT in a cage appears at the door, and lays her hand upon the handle as if to enter.]

THE FATHER (to Old Woman). Back, back! You cannot enter here.

THE OLD WOMAN. Why not, I pray? (The Parrot gives a loud squawk.)

THE DAUGHTER. Oh! Oh! Oh!

THE MOTHER (rising, and approaching Old Woman). Go away! This is no place for you.

THE OLD WOMAN. Let me be judge of that. I mean to enter here. It is my right,

THE PARROT (repeating). It is my right.

THE MOTHER (helplessly), Yes, it is her right,

[The OLD WOMAN enters, trampling upon the torn curtain, and places her cage upon one of the seats.]

THE OLD WOMAN (seating herself opposite, with a grunt of satisfaction). Well, well!—A happy ending to a brave day!

[The underground roar is resumed. A shifting of lights and of doors. A quick passing of waving handkerchiefs and of many happy faces.]

THE OLD WOMAN (gaily and forgivingly). Aha! We are off! And they go on with us.

THE FATHER (to the MOTHER). She says that-?

THE MOTHER. She says that-

THE PARROT. They go on with us. With us! With us!

THE MOTHER. Ah! Ah!

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THE OLD WOMAN. Not ten metres behind us. The Count and his bride. The happy pair.

THE PARROT, Happy pair! Happy, happy, happy pair!

[In the last fading moment of the twilight a man appears briefly just outside, presenting stiffly a folded flag.]

THE DAUGHTER (screaming wildly). Again—again! No, he shall not look at me again! He has looked at me forty-five times already! Nobody shall ever look at me again! (She clutches at the curtain. There is no curtain.)

THE MOTHER. There have been others.

THE FATHER. There will be others still.

THE PARROT. Forty-five times! Forty-five times! Forty-five ti-

THE OLD WOMAN. Peace, be still.

THE MOTHER. In heaven's name.

THE OLD WOMAN. I was there, I saw it all. My nephew is gardener at the château.

THE MOTHER. Spare us! Spare us! In heaven's name!
In heaven's name!

THE OLD WOMAN, I met him in a garden walk. His eyes—how they smiled! And his lips! He was so beautiful! And he threw me this crown-piece. See!

THE PARROT (tweaking its bars). See! See! See!

THE OLD WOMAN. The children threw flowers before them. And the little Baroness herself—she gave me this rose. A bride rose,—But this young girl—what is it that she has?

[The forty-sixth man appears with a flag and a lantern.]

THE DAUGHTER (throwing herself on the floor with a shriek). Oh! Oh! Oh!

THE MOTHER, There will be others,

THE FATHER. There will be three, -three,

THE OLD WOMAN. What is the matter?

THE PARROT, What is the matter?

THE MOTHER. We shall be there soon.

THE FATHER. One of the doctors will come down to meet us.

[Low hills begin to appear. In the moonlight an owl hoots from the branches of a blasted oak.]

THE MOTHER (to the OLD WOMAN). I hear an owl. Where does he sit?

THE OLD WOMAN. On that oak tree.

THE FATHER (to the OLD WOMAN). I see an owl on that oak tree. What does he say?

THE OLD WOMAN. To-wit, to-woo!

THE PARROT (embellishing). To-wit, to-woo! To-wit, to-woo, to-wed! To-woo, to-wed!

THE DAUGHTER (screaming madly, as the tries to throw berself through the door). Oh! Oh! Oh!

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[The moonlight begins to fail; the moon is no longer a circle.]

THE OLD WOMAN (fluttering the leaves of an almanac). See! The eclipse begins!

[The hills grow higher. The forty-seventh flagman flashes by.]

THE DAUGHTER (screaming and tearing ber bair). Oh!

[The glass pane in the door drops with a sudden crash. An affrighted raven perches on the ledge. The moon darkens continually. The hills become steep — precipitous — half in light and half in shadow.]

THE RAVEN (flapping bis wings). Caw! Caw! Caw!
THE PARROT (flapping his wings). Caw! Caw! Caw!
[The forty-eighth flagman flashes by. The Jeune
Fille begins to scream, and screams without ceasing to the end.

THE OLD WOMAN (drawing back). Alack! What have we here?

THE PARROT. What have we here? Here? Here? [The light overhead suddenly expires.]

THE OLD WOMAN. I am eighty years old, and never before have I seen such a—

THE MOTHER (to the FATHER). Is it not yet in sight?

THE FATHER. Is it—What do you say?

THE MOTHER. Is it not yet in sight?

THE OLD WOMAN. Do I not see a row of lighted windows on that hillside?

THE MOTHER. May it be so!

THE PARROT. Maybe so! Maybe so! Maybe so!

[The train suddenly enters a tunnel. Above the tenfold increase of the roar shrill the screams of the

JEUNE FILLE.

THE OLD WOMAN. I am eighty years old— THE PARROT. I am eighty years old!

THE OLD WOMAN. And never before have I seen-

THE PARROT. Never seen—Never—never—never!

[The train and its passengers and its noise are all lost in the tunnel.]

H. B. F.

## A LYRIC OF JOY

KNOW a little henchman
Who sets a yellow star
To seal the cinders of the night
Within a hollow jar.

And when the jar is broken, A marvel has been done; There lies within the rosy dusk That coal we call the sun.

But more than any wonder That makes the rose of dawn, Is that inheritance of joy My heart is happy on.

BLISS CARMAN.





PIERROT

BY RAYMOND M. CROSBY

### SERENADE

(1250 A. D.)

Like a white rose-bower in bloom,
Darkness garlands the vaulted skies,
Day's adorn'd tomb;

A whisper without from the briny west Thrills and sweetens the gloom;

Within, Miranda seeks her rest High in her turret-room.

Armies upon her walls encamp In silk and silver thread; Chased and fretted her silver lamp Dimly lights her bed;

And now the silken screen is drawn,
The velvet coverlets spread;

And the pillow of down and snowy lawn Mantles about her head;

With violet-scented rain
Sprinkle the rushy floor;
Let the tapestry hide the tinted pane,
And cover the chamber-door;

And cover the chamber-door; But leave a glimmering beam, Miranda belamour,

To touch and gild my waking dream, For I am your troubadour.

I sound my throbbing lyre, And sing to myself below; Her damsel sits beside the fire Crooning a song I know;

The tapestry shakes on the wall, The shadows hurry and go, The silent flames leap up and fall, And the muttering birch-logs glow.

Deep and sweet she sleeps,
Because of her love for me;
And deep and sweet the peace that keeps
My happy heart in fee!
Peace on the heights, in the deeps,
Peace over hill and lea,
Peace through the starlit steeps,
Peace on the starlit sea,
Because a simple maiden sleeps
Dreaming a dream of me!

JOHN DAVIDSON.

### THE DEVIL'S MANUSCRIPT

CHAPTER I .- The Black Packet.

M. "Gentleman says he knows you, sir, and has called on urgent business."

There was no answer, and John Brown, the ruined publisher, looked about him in a dazed manner. He knew he was ruined; to-morrow the world would know it also, and then—beggary stared him in the face, and infamy, too. For this the world would not care. Brown was not a great man in "the trade," and his name in "The Gazette" would not attract notice; but his name, as he stood in the felon's dock, and the ugly history a cross-examination might disclose, would probably arouse a fleeting interest, and then, the world would go on with a pitiless shrug of its shoulders. What does it matter to the moving wave of humanity if one little drop of spray from its crest is blown into nothing by the wind? Not a jot. But it was a terrible business for the

drop of spray, otherwise John Brown, publisher. He was at his best not a good-looking man, rather mean-looking than otherwise, with a thin, angular face, eyes as shifty as a jackal's and shoulders shaped like a champagne-bottle. As the shadow of coming ruin darkened over him, he seemed to shrink and look meaner than ever. He had almost forgotten the presence of his clerk. He could think of nothing but the morrow, when Simmond's voice again broke the stillness.

"Shall I say you will see him, sir?"

The question cut sharpely into the silence, and brought Brown to himself. He had half a mind to say "No." In the face of the coming to-morrow, business, urgent or otherwise, was nothing to him. Yet, after all, there could be no harm done in receiving the man. It would, at any rate, be a distraction, and, lifting his head, Brown answered—

"Yes, I will see him, Simmonds."

Simmonds went out, closing the green baize door behind him. There was a delay of a moment, and M. De Bac entered—a tall, thin figure, bearing an oblong parcel, packed in shiny, black paper, and sealed with flame-coloured wax.

"Good day, Mr. Brown;" and M. De Bac, who, for all his foreign name spoke perfect English, extended his hand.

Brown rose, put his own cold fingers into the warm grasp of his visitor, and offered him a seat.

"With your permission, Mr. Brown, I will take this other chair. It is nearer the fire. I am accustomed to warm climates, as you doubtless perceive;" and De Bac suiting his action to his words, placed his packet on the table, and began to slowly rub his long, lean fingers together. The publisher glanced at him with some curiosity. M. De Bac was as dark as an Italian, with clear, resolute features, and a moustache curled at the ends, thick enough to hide the sarcastic curve of his thin lips. He was strongly, if

sparely built, and his fiery black eyes met Brown's gaze with a look that ran through him like a needle.

"You do not appear to recognize me, Mr. Brown?"— De Bac's voice was very quiet and deep-toned.

"I have not the honour-" began the publisher; but

his visitor interrupted him.

"You mistake. We are quite old friends; and in time will always be very near each other. I have a minute or two to spare"-he glanced at a repeater-"and will prove to you that I know you. You are John Brown, that very religious young man of Battersea, who twelve years ago ruined a girl at Homerton, and sent her to-but no matter. You attracted my attention then; but, unfortunately, I had no time to devote to you. Subsequently, you affected a pretty little swindle-do n't be angry, Mr. Brown-it was very clever. Then you started in business on your own account, and married. Things went well with you, you know the art of getting at a low price, and selling at a high one. You are a born 'sweater.' Pardon the word. You know how to keep men down like beasts, and go up yourself. In doing this, you did me yeoman's service, although you are even now not aware of this. You had one fault, you have it still, and had you not been a gambler you might have been a rich man. Speculation is a bad thing, Brown-I mean gambling speculation."

Brown was an Englishman, and it goes without saying that he had courage. But there was something in De Bac's manner, some strange power in the steady stare of those black eyes, that held him to his seat as if pinned there.

As De Bac stopped, however, Brown's anger gave him strength. Every word that was said was true, and stung like the lash of a whip. He rose white with anger.

"Sir!" he began with quivering lips, and made a step forwards. Then he stopped. It was as if the sombre fire in De Bac's gaze withered his strength. An invisible hand seemed to drag him back into his seat and hold him there.

"You are hasty, Mr. Brown;" and De Bac's even voice continued: "you are really very rash. I was about to tell you a little more of your history, to tell you you are ruined, and to-morrow everyone in London—it is the world for you, Brown—will know you are a beggar, and many will know you are a cheat."

The publisher swore bitterly under his breath.

"You see, Mr. Brown," continued his strange visitor, "I know all about you, and you will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that you deserve help from me. You are too useful to let drift. I have therefore come to save you."

"Save me?"

"Yes. By means of this manuscript here," he pointed to

the packet, "which you are going to publish."

Brown now realised that he was dealing with a lunatic-He tried to stretch out his arm to touch the bell on the table; but found that he had no power to do so. He made an attempt to shout to Simmonds; but his tongue moved inaudibly in his mouth. He seemed only to have the faculty of following De Bac's words, and of answering them. He gasped out—

"It is impossible!"

"My friend"—and De Bac smiled mirthlessly—"you will publish that manuscript. I will pay. The profits will be yours. It will make your name, and you will be rich. You will even be able to build a church."

"Rich!" Brown's voice was very bitter. "M. De Bac, you said rightly. I am a ruined man. Even if you were to pay for the publication of that manuscript I could not do it now. It is too late. There are other houses. Go to them."

"But not other John Browns. You are peculiarly adapted

for my purpose. Enough of this! I know what business is, and I have many things to attend to. You are a small man, Mr. Brown, and it will take little to remove your difficulties. See! Here are a thousand pounds. They will free you from your present troubles," and De Bac tossed a pocket-book on the table before Brown. "I do not want a receipt," he went on. "I will call to-morrow for your final answer, and to settle details. If you need it I will give you more money. This hour-twelve-will suit me. Adieu!" He was gone like a flash, and Brown looked around in blank amazement. He was as if suddenly aroused from a dream. He could hardly believe the evidence of his senses, although he could see the black packet, and the neat leather pocket-book with the initials "L. De B." let in in silver on the outside. He rang his bell violently, and Simmonds appeared.

"Has M. De Bac gone?"

"I don't know sir. He didn't pass out through the door."

"There is no other way. You must have been asleep."

"Indeed I was not, sir."

Brown felt a chill as of cold fingers running down his backbone, but pulled himself together with an effort. does not matter, Simmonds. You may go."

Simmonds went out scratching his head. " How the devil did he get out?" he asked himself. "Must have been sleeping after all. The guv'nor seems a bit dotty to-day.

It 's the smash coming-sure."

He wrote a letter or two, and then taking his hat, sallied forth to an aerated bread-shop for his cheap and wholesome lunch, for Simmonds was a saving young man, engaged to a young lady living out Camden Town way. Simmonds perfectly understood the state of affairs, and was not a little anxious about matters, for the mother of his fiancee, a widow who let lodgings, had only agreed to his engagement after much persuasion; and if he had to announce the fact that instead of "thirty bob a week," as he put it, that his income was nothing at all, there would be an end of everything.

"M'ria's all right," he said to his friend Wilkes, in trustful confidence as they sat over their lunch; "but that old torpedo"—by which name he designated his mother-in-law elect—"she'll raise Cain if there's a smash-up."

In the meantime, John Brown tore open the pocket-book with shaking hands, and, with a crisp rustling, a number of new bank-notes fell out, and lay in a heap before him. counted them one by one. They totalled to a thousand pounds exactly. He was a small man. M. De Bac had said so truly, if a little rudely, and the money was more than enough to stave off ruin. De Bac had said, too, that if needed he would give him more, and then Brown fell to trembling all over. He was like a man snatched from the very jaws of death. At Battersea he wore a blue ribbon; but now he went to the cabinet, filled a glass with raw brandy, and drained it at a gulp. In a minute or so the generous cordial warmed his chilled blood, and picking up the notes, he counted them again, and thrust them into his breast-pocket. After this he paced the room up and down in a feverish manner, longing for the morrow when he could settle up the most urgent demands against him. Then, on a sudden, a thought struck him. It was almost as if it had been whispered in his ear. Why trouble at all about matters? He had a clear thousand with him, and in an hour he could be out of the country! He hesitated, but prudence Extradition laws stretched everywhere; and there was another thing-that extraordinary madman, De Bac, had promised more money on the morrow. After all, it was better to stay.

As he made this resolve his eyes fell on the black packet

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on the table. The peculiar colour of the seals attracted his attention. He bent over them, and saw that the wax bore an impress of a V-shaped shield, within which was set a trident. He noticed also that the packet was tied with silventhread. His curiosity was excited. He sat down, snipped the threads with a penknife, tore off the black paper covering, flung it into the fire, and saw before him a bulky manuscript exquisitely written on very fine paper. A closer examination showed that they were a number of short stories. Now Brown was in no mood to read; but the title of the first tale caught his eye, and the writing was so legible that he had glanced over half a dozen lines before he was aware of the fact. Those first half-dozen lines were sufficient to make him read the page, and when he had read the page the publisher felt he was before the work of a genius.

He was unable to stop now; and, with his head resting between his hands, he read on tirelessly. Simmonds came in once or twice and left papers on the table, but his master took no notice of him. Brown forgot all about his lunch, and turning over page after page read as if spell-bound. He was a business man, and was certain the book would sell in thousands. He read as one inspired to look into the author's thoughts and see his design. Short as the stories were, they were Titanic fragments, and every one of them taught a hideous lesson of corruption. Some of them, cloaked in a religious garb, breathed a spirit of pitiless ferocity; others were rich with the sensuous odours of an Eastern garden; others again were as the tender green of moss hiding the treacherous deeps of a quicksand; and all of them bore the hall-mark of genius. They moved the man sitting there to tears, they shook him with laughter, they seemed to rock his very soul asleep; but through it all he saw, as the mariner views the beacon fire on a rocky coast, the deadly plan of the writer. There was money in them-thousands-and all was to be his. Brown's sluggish blood was running to flame, a strange strength glowed in his face, and an uncontrollable admiration for De Bac's evil power filled him. The book, when published, might corrupt generations yet unborn; but that was nothing to Brown. It meant thousands for him, and an eternal fame to De Bac. He did not grudge the writer the fame as long as he kept the thousands.

"By God!" and he brought his fist down on the table with a crash, "the man may be a lunatic; but he is the greatest genius the world ever saw—or he is the devil incar-

nate."

And somebody laughed softly in the room.

The publisher looked up with a start, and saw Simmonds standing before him.

"Did you laugh, Simmonds?"

"No sir!" replied the clerk with a surprised look.

"Who laughed, then?"

"There is no one here but ourselves, sir-and I didn't laugh."

"Did you hear nothing?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Strange!" and Brown began to feel chill again.

"What time is it?" he asked with an effort.

"It is half-past six, sir."

"So late as that? You may go, Simmonds. Leave me the keys. I will be here for some time. Good evening."

"Mad as a coot," muttered Simmonds to himself, "must break the news to M'ria to-night. Oh, Lord!" and his eyes were very wet as he went out into the Strand, and got into a blue omnibus.

When he was gone, Brown turned to the fire, poker in hand. To his surprise he saw that the black paper was still there, burning red hot, and the wax of the seals was still intact—the seals themselves shining like orange glow-lights.

He beat at the paper with the poker; but instead of crumbling to ashes it yielded passively to the stroke, and came back to its original shape. Then a fury came on Brown. He raked at the fire, threw more coals over the paper, and blew at the flames with his bellows until they roared up the chimney; but still the coppery glare of the packet-cover never turned to the grey of ashes. Finally, he could endure it no longer, and, putting the manuscript into the safe, turned off the electric light and stole out of his office like a thief.

### CHAPTER II .- The Red Trident.

When Beggarman, Bowles & Co., of Providence Passage, Lombard Street, called at eleven o'clock on the morning following DeBac's visit, their representative was not a little surprised to find the firm's bills met in hard cash, and Simmonds paid him with a radiant face. When the affair was settled, the clerk leaned back in his chair, saying halfaloud to himself, "By George! I am glad after all M'ria did not keep our appointment in the Camden Road last night." Then his face began to darken. "Wonder where she could have been, though?" his thoughts ran on; "half sorry I introduced her to Wilkes last Sunday at the Victoria Park. Wilkes ain't half the man I am, though," and he tried to look at himself in the window pane, "but he has two pound ten a week-Lord! There's the guv'nor ringing." He hurried into Brown's room, received a brief order, and was about to go back when the publisher spoke again.

"Simmonds!"

" Sir."

"If M. De Bac calls, show him in at once."

"Sir," and the clerk went out.

Left to himself, Brown tried to go on with the manu-

script; but was not able to do so. He was impatient for the coming of De Bac, and kept watching the hands of the clock as they slowly travelled toward twelve. When he came to the office in the morning Brown had looked with a nervous fear in the fireplace, half expecting to find the black paper still there; and it was a considerable relief to his mind to find it was not. He could do nothing, not even open the envelopes of the letters that lay on his table. He made an effort to find occupation in the morning's paper. It was full of some absurd correspondence on a trivial subject, and he wondered at the thousands of fools who could waste time in writing and in reading yards of print on the theme of "Whether women should wear neckties." The ticking of the clock irritated him. He flung the paper aside, just as the door opened and Simmonds came in. For a moment Brown thought he had come to announce De Bac's arrival; but no-Simmonds simply placed a square envelope on the table before Brown.

"Pass-book from Bransom's, sir, just come in;" and he went out.

Brown took it up mechanically, and opened the envelope. A type-written letter fell out with the pass-book. He ran his eyes over it with astonishment. It was briefly to inform him that M. De Bac had paid into Brown's account yesterday afternoon the sum of five thousand pounds, and that, adjusting overdrafts, the balance at his credit was four thousand seven hundred and twenty pounds thirteen shillings and three pence. Brown rubbed his eyes. Then he hurriedly glanced at the pass-book. The figures tallied—there was no error, no mistake. He pricked himself with his penknife to see if he was awake, and finally shouted to Simmonds: "Read this letter aloud to me, Simmonds," he said.

Simmond's eyes opened, but he did as he was bidden, and there was no mistake about the account. "Anything else, sir?" asked Simmonds, when he had finished.

"No-nothing," and Brown was once more alone. He sat staring at the figures before him in silence, almost mesmerising himself with the intentness of his gaze.

"My God!" he burst out at last, in absolute wonder. "Who is your God, Brown?" answered a deep voice.

"I-I-M. De Bac! How did you come?"

"I did not drop down the chimney," said De Bac with a grin; "your clerk announced me in the ordinary way, but you were so absorbed you did not hear. So I took the liberty of sitting in this chair, and awaiting your return to earthly matters. You were dreaming, Brown;—by the way, who is your God?" he repeated with a low laugh.

"I-I do not understand, sir."

"Possibly not, possibly not. I would n't bother about the matter. Ah! I see Bransom's have sent you your passbook! Sit down, Brown. I hate to see a man fidgetting about—I paid in that amount yesterday on a second thought. It is enough—eh?"

Brown's jackal eyes contracted. Perhaps he could get more out of De Bac? But a look at the strong, impassive face before him frightened him.

"More than enough, sir," he stammered; and then with a rush, "I am grateful—anything I can do for you?"

"Oh! I know, I know, Brown; -by the way, you do not object to smoke?"

"Certainly not. I do not smoke myself."

"In Battersea, eh?" And De Bac, pulling out a silver cheroot case, held it out to Brown. But the publisher declined.

"Money wouldn't buy a smoke like that in England," remarked De Bac, "but as you will. I wouldn't smoke if I were you. Such abstinence looks respectable and means

nothing." He put a cigar between his lips, and pointed his forefinger at the end. To Brown's amazement an orange-flame licked out from under the finger-nail, and vanished like a flash of lightning; but the cigar was alight, and its fragrant odour filled the room. It reached even Simmonds, who sniffed at it like a buck scenting the morning air "By George!" he exclaimed in wonder, "what 'baccy!"

M. De Bac settled himself comfortably in his chair, and spoke with his cigar between his teeth. "Now you have recovered a little from your surprise, Brown, I may as well tell you that I never carry matches. This little scientific discovery I have made is very convenient, is it not?"

"I have never seen anything like it."

"There are a good many things you have not seen, Brown—but to work. Take a pencil and paper and note down what I say. You can tell me when I have done if you agree or not."

Brown did as he was told, and De Bac spoke slowly and

carefully.

"The money I have given you is absolutely your own on the following terms. You will publish the manuscript I left with you, enlarge your business, and work as you have hitherto worked as a 'sweater.' You may speculate as much as you like. You will not lose. You need not avoid the publication of religious books, but you must never give in charity secretly. I do not object to a big cheque for a public object, and your name in all the papers. It will be well for you to hound down the vicious. Never give them a chance to recover themselves. You will be a legislator. Stongly uphold all those measures, which, under a moral cloak, will do harm to mankind. I do not mention them. I do not seek to hamper you with detailed instructions. Work on these general lines, and you will do what I want. A word more. It will be advisable whenever you have a

chance to call public attention to a great evil, which is also a vice. Thousands who have never heard of it before will hear of it then—and human nature is very frail. You have noted all this down?"

"I have. You are a strange man, M. De Bac."

M. De Bac frowned, and Brown began to tremble.

"I do not permit you to make observations about me, Mr. Brown."

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"Do not do so again. Will you agree to all this, I promise you unexampled prosperity for ten years. At the end of that time I will want you elsewhere. And you must agree to take a journey with me."

"A long one, sir?" Brown's voice was just a shade satirical.

M. De Bae smiled oddly. "No—in your case I promise a quick passage. These are all the conditions I attach to my gift of six thousand pounds to you."

Brown's amazement did not blind him to the fact of the advantage he had, as he thought, over his visitor. The six thousand pounds were already his, and he had given no promise. With a sudden boldness he spoke out.

"And if I decline?"

"You will return me my money, and my book, and I will go elsewhere."

"The manuscript, yes-but if I refuse to give back the money?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" M. De Bac's mirthless laugh chilled Brown to the bone. "Very good, Brown—but you won't refuse. Sign that like a good fellow," and he flung a piece of paper towards Brown, who saw that it was a promissory note, drawn up in his name, agreeing to pay M. De Bac the sum of six thousand pounds on demand.

"I shall do no such thing," said Brown stoutely.

M. De Bac made no answer, but calmly touched the bell. In a half-minute Simmonds appeared.

"Be good enough to witness Mr. Brown's signature to that document," said De Bac to him, and then fixed his gaze on Brown. There was a moment of hesitation, and then—the publisher signed his name, and Simmonds did likewise as a witness. When he had gone, De Bac carefully put the paper by in a letter-case he drew from his vest pocket.

"Your scientific people would call this an exhibition of odic force, Brown-eh?"

Brown made no answer. He was shaking in every limb, and great pearls of sweat rolled down his forehead.

"You see, Brown," coutinued De Bac, "after all you are a free agent. Either agree to my terms and keep the money, or say you will not, pay me back, receive your note-of-hand, and I go elsewhere with my book. Come—time is precious."

And from Brown's lips there hissed a low "I agree."

"Then that is settled." and De Bac rose from his chair. "There is a little thing more—stretch out your arm, like a good fellow—the right arm."

Brown did so; and De Bac placed his forefinger on his wrist, just between what palmists call "the lines of life." The touch was as that of a red-hot iron, and with a quick cry Brown drew back his hand and looked at it. On his wrist was a small red trident, as cleanly marked as if it had been tattooed into the skin. The pain was but momentary; and, as he looked at the mark, he heard De Bac say, "Adieu, once more, Brown. I will find my way out—do n't trouble to rise." Brown heard him wish Simmonds an affable "Good-day," and he was gone.

S. LEVETT YEATS.

(To be continued.)



THE SUICIDE

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BY CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON

### NOTES

¶Je n'aime pas les si jeunes gens: ils sont ennuyeux et sentimentals comme les harmonicas. Henri Murger,

As the details have transpired concerning the new English magazine, "The Savoy," my astonishment at its first announcement has been increased. I had supposed the vogue of artistic quarterlies at an end, and in spite of the merit of recent "Yellow Books" I had not thought their success with the public such as would lead another publisher to imitation. I presume I was wrong

The prospectus contains names of considerable prominence: Mr. George Moore, M. Paul Verlaine, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, "John Oliver Hobbes," Mr. Frank Harris, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mr. Frederick Wedmore, Miss Mathilde Blind, Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Max Beerbohm, Mr. Havelock Ellis, Mr. Joseph Pennell, Signor Cesare Lombroso, M. Degas, M. Forain, Mr. Will Rothenstein, Mr. C. H. Shannon and M. Anquetin. A formidable and interesting array, in spite of which I feel that the enterprise is impossible from the start. The editors are Mr. Arthur Symons and Mr. Aubrey Beardsley.

They are men of great cleverness and no little real ability, but men who are decadent in the unpleasant sense of the word. Mr. Symons has become notorious for his immoral pose; he has sought a reputation for wickedness and, in some quarters he has, doubtless been successful. His latest book, "London Nights," is a simple calendar of depravity, a record of prostitutions. Had Mr. Symons been a religious fanatic, laboring with flagellant intent he could not more

completely have abased him.

Perhaps the most generous view to take of his writing is to believe it sincere. While in doing this you damn him completely for a man wholly vicious, to believe him merely posing—to think his expression of vice no more than an assumption—is to damn his task and sense of decency with equal vigour

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As for Mr. Aubrey Beardsley, he is a man of such splendid gifts that one had hoped to overlook qualities less attractive. His work, however, has often been so obtrusively indecent that this is impossible, at best—one has many misgivings as to the morality of his future work.

The announcement of the new magazine would hardly lead us to believe that decadent days are over or that degeneration is any the less pronounced. The reaction against the "new school" which followed the Wilde trial and which gave Mr. Henry Quilter the opportunity for asinity he so blatently embraced, was not lasting; the fin-de-siècle pose was not worn out, and now it comes to us again in all its unattractiveness. It cannot last. "The Savoy" is absurd, impossible, and Mr. Leonard Smithers, the publisher, will soon find it out—probably to personal discomfiture of himself and his associates.

¶ A while ago I printed a quaint bit of doggerel entitled, "Ye Ballad of Betsy." A correspondent sends me another ballad of the same date, which I print as interesting for the curious modernity of its tone,

## THE BALLAD OF PATTY AND THE DOOK.

Patty she was a maiden fair:— To London town she did repair.

She was a maid of low degree
But she trusted much to her beautee.

She found a place in Cavendish square—A widowed duchess was living there.

The duchess had an only child:

He was her son and rather wild.

Patty was fly and she quickly took The ardent heart of the youthful dook.

He whispered to her one evening fair;—
"Patty, Patty, I like your hair.

"I like your eyes and I like your style,

"I 'll try to love you a little while."

But Patty repulsed the ardent dook
With a witching frown and a stern rebuke;—

"I am perfectly willing to be your wife

"And wear your coronet all my life,

"But you 're mistaken if you think

"I 'll take on any other link."

The youthful dook was fairly won (He was his mother's only son).

"I swear I'll make you my duchess," he said,

"As soon as I 'm of age we 'll wed."

His eager suit and his ardent word His mother the widowed duchess heard,

And she said to herself, in French said she:—
"Je leur casserai les coeurs, pardi!"

And so next morning she arose
And she says to her son: "Put on your clothes,

Put on your ducal coronet, Take your umbrella, it may be wet."

The dook arose, put on his clothes, His coronet and eke his hose.

A ship lay ready at the wharf;

The dook and his mother, they are off.

When Patty found her dook was gone Like a raving lunatic she took on.

But wiser counsels soon prevailed And in a second ship she sailed,

She chased them across the raging main— The duchess's ruse was all in vain,

For Patty snatched her dook awa'
And the duchess became her mother-in-law.

¶ Since the days of Edward Lear or the appearance of "Alice in Wonderland," I have not met with any more charming bit of nonsense than a sentence an exchange prints from the advance sheets of Miss Gertrude Smith's "Arabella and Araminta Stories," which Messrs. Copeland and Day are to publish for Christmas. The book is to have illustrations by Miss Ethel Reed and a preface by Miss Mary E. Wilkins, and—if it is all as delightful as this—it is certain to become a classic.

"And Arabella picked a poppy and Araminta picked a poppy and Arabella picked a poppy and Araminta picked a poppy and Araminta picked a poppy and Araminta picked a poppy (et sic ad nauseam) until they each had a large bunch!"

¶It is an interesting comment on the financial success of books written by women that a London publisher lately offered a distinguished novelist an extra £200 if the latter would consent to have his latest story issued under an assumed and feminine name.

¶There has appeared recently in some of the Literary Journals, the advertisement of a man who offers to furnish plots for aspiring novelists. At first blush it seemed a shocking thing and I was anxious to overthrow the man. He was

an outsider-a philistine-entering a sacred field and he deserved destruction. On second thoughts, however, he brings up the whole question of collaboration, which is, to say the least, a debatable one. The furnishing of plots is precisely the function of many a worker in double harness. And it is certainly no greater sin to buy a plot outright than to purchase it on the half-profit plan. The advertiser's scheme is a perfectly legitimate one, and it is, moreover, capable of splendid elaboration. I myself, for instance, have a collection of excellent titles, for which I despair of finding suitable stories; I have, too, wonderful stories which I am quite unable to write; and there come moments of self-confidence when I feel capable of the lasting lyrical expression of great thoughts, had I but the great thoughts. And so on. The advertiser was right; his plan was the only sensible one and it would be well for others to follow the example. If only Mr. Eric Mackay had bought some ideas; if Mr. Hamlin Garland would invest in a style; if Mr. J. K. Bangs could rent a sense of humour-purchase a means of expression and steal an excuse for writing; -what charming compositions we should have! If-as the "Yellow Dwarf" suggests-Mr. George Moore's "Mildred Lawson" could be rewritten by some one who knows English-what a masterpiece it would be!

The can hardly be doubted that long before the present emancipation of woman there were many ladies who, while leading an orderly and secluded life, had cultivated and refined minds, and possessed no mean amount of general knowledge. The charm of their intelligence was felt as an attainment, their study and reading was a thing taken for granted as an occupation of their solitary hours. At present the conditions seem much changed and we see rather the pursuit, than the results of culture. Women hunt it down in regiments, study behind the footlights, as it were, and

among other women rather than among books. Wisdom is communicated wholly by word of mouth, and there is nothing for a knowledge of which womankind may thirst, but there is also a woman ready to lecture upon it.

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Learning from lectures is, of course, in no wise impossible; it is indeed an accepted academic method. But the qualifications of a university lecturer have been more strictly examined into than those of the ordinary female priestess of culture. Indeed for her there are but two alternative requisites; she must have an attractive presence and personality, or, usually, as the result of an unfortunate married life, she must stand in present need of charity. She may then go "parlor-lecturing" before an infinity of clubs. One is reminded of John Davidson's doggerell:

"For a caravan is the only plan;
Hurry my toms and trulls!
Ho-ye-ho, and a rumble-low!
Pay your penny, and see the show:
This is the age of gulls."

The "lady lecturess" has discovered that the inner meaning of the Wagner Cycle is that Brunhilde's father was not kind to her, that the marvel of Renaissance architecture is that it has three dimensions; such are her profundities. She confuses the charm of Greek sculpture with the merits of Jaeger flannels, and the appreciation of Elizabethan Lyrics with questions of "voice culture" and the "Delsarte method." She interlards her remarks with "art truths," "cultural effort," and like terms of the technique of inanity. And while she flounders before her hearers, the books of the masters gather dust in the recesses of our libraries.

The decay of private life among women has perhaps made it inevitable that culture should become a public function rather than a private delight. But it is surely sad that so fine an energy should show no real result, and that eagerness inthe chase has come to excuse the emptiness of the game bag.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

- THE WISH: By HERMAN SUDERMAN. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co. 12mo.
- LITTLE RIVERS: By HENRY VAN DYKE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 12MO, \$2.00.
- THE ART OF LIVING: By ROBERT GRANT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Illustrated, \$2.50.
- THE BACHELOR'S CHRISTMAS AND OTHER STORIES: By ROBERT GRAMT: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Illustrated, \$1.50.
- THE ACADEMY SONG BOOK: By CHARLES H. LEVERMORE and FREDERIC REDDALL. Boston: Ginn & Co. Small 4to.
- WATCHERS OF TWILIGHT AND OTHER POEMS: By ARTHUR J. STRINGER. London, Ontario: T. H. Warren.
- PAULINE AND OTHER POEMS: By ARTHUR J. STRINGER. London, Ontario: T. H. Warren. Small 4to.
- SONGS OF SPRING: By Louis M. Elshrmus. Buffalo: Peter Paul Book Co. Illustrated, 16mo.
- THE MOODS OF A SOUL: By Louis M. Elshemus. Buffalo: Charles W. Moulton. 16mo.
- ORATIONS, ADDRESSES AND CLUB ESSAYS: By Hon. George A Sanders. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co. 18mo.
- THE SECOND JUNGLE BOOK: By RUDYARD KIPLING. Illustrated, 18880. New York: The Century Co.



#### THE CHAP-BOOK

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